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EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN BULGARIA, 1944-1953

[Comment: The following report on education in Bulgaria from September 1944 through 1953 was compiled from articles appearing in newspapers and periodicals published in Sofia, August-November 1953.]

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Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.⁷Higher Education

Bulgaria has 31,512 students attending higher educational institutions.(1) During 1952, 4.8 times more students completed higher education courses than in 1939, with over 30 percent of the students receiving state stipends.(2) There are now 20 higher educational institutions, 42 faculties, 150 fields of specialization, and over 2,000 instructors.(3) The 20 higher educational institutions include 4 technical schools, 4 agricultural schools, 3 economic schools, 3 institutes of the arts, and 2 medical academies.(4)

The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences directs over 30 research institutes with 351 scientific workers. The total number of scientific institutes today is 118, with 1,186 scientific workers.(2)

The composition of the student body has changed. The students are mainly workers, farmers, and members of the laboring intelligentsia. Candidate-student workers' courses to prepare workers for higher institutions of learning have been established. After completing one of these courses of instruction, a worker may enter a higher institution of learning without taking the usual competitive examination. About 3,200 persons have completed these courses, including 800 during the 1953-1954 school year.

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During the first Five-Year Plan [1949-1952], 23,125 persons received a higher education. During 1952, 6,293 young specialists were graduated from institutions of higher education.

There are still many weaknesses in the higher educational system, especially in connection with examinations. Only 58.6 percent of the first-year students (purvokursnik) passed all their examinations [in 1952-1953], 23 percent failed one examination, 11.4 percent failed two examinations, and 6.7 percent failed three or more examinations. The number of failures in examinations was greater in the more advanced courses.

Study schedules are important in the organization of academic work. About 45-50 credit hours have been eliminated from the curriculum, which is designed to stress fields of specialization, and students now study about 6 hours daily.

In a large number of courses, there are not enough textbooks for the students. In 1952, KNIK (Komitet za nauka, izkustvo, i kultura, Committee for Science, Art, and Culture) took steps to increase the writing of textbooks by Bulgarian instructors and the translating of Soviet textbooks. By August 1953, 164 textbooks, 50 of which were Soviet translations, were published.

In 1953, the government allocated 36,392,000 (new) leva for stipends.(3) About 10,422 persons, or 34 percent of all students in higher institutions of learning, received stipends during 1952-1953.(4)

Before 9 September 1944, there were in Bulgaria only three student dormitories, which housed 150 students. There are now 23 dormitories housing 2,700 students. In 1952, a new dormitory with a capacity of 720 students was opened [place not given] and another new dormitory with the same capacity is planned for 1953. Construction of similar dormitories during the next few years is planned.

Buildings for the machine, hydrotechnical, and architecture faculties at the "Stalin" State Polytechnical Institute in Sofia have been built during the last few years. Ten laboratories have been built. Sofia State University has a large, modern building, as does the Agricultural Institute in Plovdiv.

There are now 18 student cafeterias which feed about 40 percent of the students.(3)

Secondary Education

There were 296 general secondary schools in 1952-1953. Professional training has increased, and schools for labor reserves financed entirely by the government have been organized.(5) During 1952-1953, 26,325 students were studying in schools for labor reserves.(6) Secondary professional schools have been reorganized into 146 tekhnikums with 200 fields of specialization.(5) They are training 58,235 students.(6) In 1952, 67,679 students were enrolled in professional schools.(1)

For those who have not received a 7-year and [or] secondary education [11 years], 61 evening preparatory gymnasiums and 45 evening gymnasiums have been established.(6)

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Serious weaknesses still exist in the teaching of second-year classes. The students are especially poor in mathematics and in the Bulgarian language. (5)

About 20 percent of all the students in workers' schools are employed in industry or are the children of such employees. At present about 2,807 persons are enrolled in workers' evening training courses. (4)

About 666,996 citizens have become literate in recent years. By the end of 1953, illiteracy will be eliminated among persons up to 50 years of age.

Preschool, Primary, Elementary Education

In 1953, there were 5,919 children's institutions for preschool training, with 264,982 pupils. (2) [Source 5 states that there are 6,145 kindergartens with 270,513 children enrolled.] The teaching staff numbered 9,363. These preschool institutions include day (tselodnevna), half-day (poludnevna), weekly, (sedmichna), and seasonal (sezonna) kindergartens.

In 1952, 99.3 percent of all children of school age in towns, and 98.9 percent of those in villages, were enrolled in schools. (4) The number of children not in school was 3,752. (6) [Source 5 states that the number of children not in school in 1952-1953 was 4,826.]

The number of primary and elementary schools in 1952-1953 was 6,294. Over 10,000 children in elementary schools are housed in dormitories. (6) The government budget for 1953 appropriated funds for 325 dormitories for 9,242 children. (5)

Teachers

In 1953, there were seven times more teachers than in 1944. The government has taken measures to improve teacher-training standards. An institute for perfecting teachers and supervisory cadres has been opened, where many teachers pass qualification courses each summer. In 1953, 6,470 teachers completed theoretical and academic training. In comparison with 1944, the number of students in higher institutes for teachers has increased 13 times for kindergarten teachers, six times for primary and elementary-school teachers, and three times for teachers in advanced schools. (4)

There are now three teachers' schools with three sections, each consisting of a 4-year course, for training kindergarten teachers. There are 18 teachers' schools for primary teachers (including three Turkish) and ten teachers' institutes. (6)

The general education and curricular commissions in the schools, the pedagogical offices (kabinet) in all okoliya centers, the Institute for Perfecting Teachers in Sofia, and the directors of cadres in education all work to raise the level of teaching.

The material well-being of teachers has improved. According to a special decree of the Council of Ministers, teachers in villages receive free housing with heat and light and 2.5 decares of land for their own use. (5)

About 400 teachers have been awarded the gold, silver, or bronze orders of Cyril and Methodius and many have received the Excellence in Education (Otlichni na Narodnata Prosveta) Badge. (6)

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Turkish Minority

The number of Turkish general education schools has grown to 1,071 in 1953, with 91,575 students and 3,529 teachers. There are now four general secondary schools and separate courses for Turks in three secondary schools. There is a section in the Teachers' Institute in Kolarovgrad, and three divisions at the Sofia State University, to train Turkish teachers. About 180 young Turks are studying in the Turkish language section of the Sofia State University. The Bulgarian government has sent 20 young persons to study in Soviet Azerbaydzhan.(4) A decree of the Council of Ministers on preparations for the 1953-1954 school year provided for 850 stipends for young Turks in tekhnikums.(5) Each year a number of young people who have received a higher education in teachers' institutes go among the Turkish workers to teach their children.(4)

Other Educational Developments

Various types of extracurricular work have been developed. The "Vulko Chervenkov" Pioneer Palace in Sofia and 40 Pioneer centers have been organized, in addition to summer camps, where 111,200 students spent the summer of 1953. Study and technical circles, scientific courses, as well as art and physical culture groups, have been formed. Travel groups have also been organized.

The "Uchtekhprom" (Uchebno-tekhnicheska promishlenost, School Supply Industry) enterprise was set up to provide textbooks and other school supplies. (5) Up to now, 2,020 different scientific textbooks, and a total of about 56,123,374 volumes, have been published.(6)

At the beginning of 1953, the Ministry of Education established a Study Methods Council (Uchebno-metodicheski suvet) for discussing student manuscripts and literature.(5)

There are 31 legitimate theaters and opera houses in operation. The number of motion-picture theaters today is 5.7 times greater than before 9 September 1944 and the number of motion-picture houses in villages has increased 21.3 times during this period.

During 1952, the number of public libraries with over 500 books increased to 6,761. More than 800 cultural groups with 15,000 participants were active during the 1952-1953 season.(2)

SOURCES

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3. Rabotnichesko Delo, 2 Sep 53, article by Krustyu Dobrev, Deputy Chairman of KNIK
4. Ibid., 24 Nov 53
5. Ibid., 7 Sep 53, article by Demir Yanev, Minister of Education
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